

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD EXTENDED FOR INTERIM RULES ON ALASKA LANDS

Interior Secretary James Watt announced today he has extended the public comment period for proposed interim rules relaxing restrictions on Federal land use in Alaska by 11 days to March 16.

"We are in the process of providing the people of Alaska with detailed information on the many issues involved in these regulations," Watt said. "I want to be certain they have time to study this material and provide us with their best judgments on the worth of the proposals."

The proposed interim rules, published in the Federal Register on January 19, would relieve many current restrictions on public use, access, and recreation on more than 100 million acres of national parks, monuments, preserves, and wildlife refuges in Alaska.

The proposed rules would apply to national parks, monuments, and preserves administered by the National Park Service and national wildlife refuges administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, most of which were created or enlarged by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980.

National Park Service's portion of the regulations should be sent to the Alaska Regional Director, National Park Service, 540 Fifth Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99501. Comments on the Fish and Wildlife Service's portion of the regulations should be sent to the Alaska Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99507.

The schedule is such that interim regulations could become effective this spring in time for peak public use of Alaska public lands. Final regulations will be adopted in the future after a full rulemaking process, including consultation and public comment.

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